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## Servant Leadership Theory Development & Measurement

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### Abstract

A servant leadership has been raised up in recent years since Robert Greenleaf publish his personal journal about his own experience journey. Years by years, academia becoming interested about this leadership style. With the uniqueness of different term of leader and servant, servant leadership still tried to find out the empirical and theoretical research in theory building. Servant leadership theory development talks about the concept and the model of this leadership style, however servant leadership measurement tried to find empirical research to measure servant leadership concept. Both of this stream are important to strengthen the servant leadership theory building in academic perspective. However, there are some critics of servant leadership theory and measurement development both in methodology and theory building.

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*Keyword: servant leadership, theory development, measurement*

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## 1. Introduction

The origin of servant leadership concept was constructed by the first conceptualized of servant leadership by Robert Greenleaf and the historical figures of Jesus Christ. Robert Greenleaf put the “phenomenal” definition of leadership by servant leadership through serves first, not lead. Furthermore, servant leaders seek to transform their followers to & quo:grow healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants (Greenleaf, 1977:13-14). By this explanation, Robert Greenleaf has not been developing the set of characteristic of servant leadership, however He pointed out the most important term of servant leadership : serve first, then aspire to lead.

Robert Greenleaf is not the one and only man who invent the servant leadership concept, in 1978 Burns asserted about servant leadership : “(Transforming) leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality...But transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral (italics in original) in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, thus it has a transforming effect on both” (Burns, 1978: 20)

From the early of servant leadership concept being introduced in practice and academia, there some development of the theory itself. Some papers tried to understanding the differentiation the concept of servant leadership and the other leadership concept, the others researcher tried to examining how to measure servant leadership characteristic.

This paper aims to review and examining the origins and development of the concept of servant leadership. Then follows a review of the differentiation between servant leadership concept and the other leadership style concept. Next, the paper will show various measures and assessment instrument that has been developed to better understanding how servant leadership manifested and how it developed.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *The Origins of Servant Leadership Theory*

The term of “servant leadership” was coined by Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) in his seminar work “The Servant Leader”, first published in 1970:

“The servant leader is servant first... it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings on to aspire to lead..the best test and difficult to administer is this: Do those serve grow as person? Do they, shile being served, become servants? And, what is the effect on the least previllage in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed? (1977:7)

Servant leadership was constructed by two term: leader and servant, both of this term are “oxymoron” because plays two different role in one time, serve and lead. Its maybe difficult to accept that as the leader, they serve too. Serve and lead at the same time- the leaders who serves, and the servant who lead. However the dynamic conceptual relationship and complementary roles between servanthood and leadership have recently attracted the attention of leadership scholars and practices ((Bass,1999; Bowman, 1997; Buchen, 1998; Chappel, 2000; Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998; De Pree, 1989; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Graham, 1991; Pollard, 1997; Russel, 2000; Senge, 1990, 1995; Spears, 1995).

The most important when we explain about theory is what the origin of its theory itself. It can provide what the root of the theory and give the “big picture” through its development. Servant leadership has a philosophical basis of the theory :

1. **The motivation** of servant leadership is to serve first, not to lead. Its breaking up our paradigm before that leaders always come to activate their power, manage something and direct the followers.
2. Servant leaders is who later serves out of prompting of conscience or in conformity with normative expectations (Greenleaf, 1977: 14)
3. **The self concept** of servant leaders: view themselves as stewards- its derived from Greek “aikonomia” which mean house of manager.

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